TL2423

REPUBLICA DEMOCRATICA DE TIMOR LESTE

STATEMENT BY

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MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF FRETILIN

BEFORE THE FOURTH COMMITTEE

36TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON ITEM 93, QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

NEW YORK, 21 OCTOBER 1981

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the leadership of my country, the Central Committee of FRETILIN, and our beloved people, I wish to thank this Committee for granting my delegation the honour to appear here today, in spite of the futile objections of the Indonesian delegation, to address an issue of paramount importance to the international community: the question of East Timor and the struggle of our valient people for self-determination and independence. For us, the people of East Timor, and all colonised peoples of the world, the Fourth Committee is the most important one since its very existence is based on the principles that "the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights..." As long as colonialism, in whatever form, persists on the face of the Earth, it is the duty of the international community, represented in this Committee, to seek ways and means to bring about the full and speedy decolonization of the colonised territories.

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My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for your election to preside over the work of this Committee. We believe, Mr. Chairman, that coming from a region of the world that has witnessed so much human suffering and pain, the loss of millions of lives in wars fought by your people in the course of many centuries you are in a unique position to understand the profound aspirations of our people. Like the Arab nation - like the herioc Palestinian people - the East Timorese fought against colonialism and are fighting Indonesian military occupation of our homeland. Like your people, Mr. Chairman, our people too long for peace and aspire to human dignity and freedom from foreign oppression and domination. We believe, therefore, that under your guidance, the Fourth Committee will again uphold the sacred rights of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence.

In addressing this Committee today, we wish to express here our admiration and respect for the Chairman of the Fourth Committee during the 35th session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Ambassador Noel Sinclair. His dedication and commitment to the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter, his deep understanding of the aspirations of the colonised peoples, and his personal charm and simplicity, made him a great Chairman of this important Committee.

The question of East Timor was first introduced as an item in the General Assembly's list of "Non-self Governing Territories" more than two decades ago when the United Nations began consideration of the so-called Portuguese "overseas territories". From the very beginning of the great debates on decolonization and even going back to the day of Indonesia's independence celebration in 1945, no Indonesian leader voiced any claim over East Timor. Even at the height of Indonesia's military expansionism to annex Malaysia and West New Guinea in the 60s, Indonesian leaders ignored the so-called Portuguese Timor. In the course of the general debate at the 15th session of the General Assembly, in 1960, the then Foreign

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Affairs Minister of Indonesia stated:

> Indonesia explicitly does not make any claim at all to... [East] Timor which lies within the Indonesian archipelago, but was not part of the Netherland's East Indies.

Indonesia after fighting a long anti-colonial war against Holland (with fascist Japan's generous military help) embarked on an anti-imperialist path. However, even Sukarno, the great anti- colonial fighter, chose to ignore East Timor, then under Portuguese domination. Indonesia's anti-colonialism did not apply to East Timor. With the fall of Sukarno, the new regime in Jakarta inaugurated a policy of accomodation with the Portuguese in East Timor.

Following the Portuguese coup in 1974, FRETILIN leaders aware of the Indonesian general's apetite for territorial expansion and their legitimate security concerns, took immediate steps to reassure them of our sincere desire to establish relations of friendship and cooperation between a future independent East Timor and the Republic of Indonesia. I was entrusted by FRETILIN leadership to seek Indonesia's understanding and support for our legitimate right to self-determination and independence. In June 1974, I was dipatched to Jakarta where I met with Mr. Adam Malik, then Indonesia's Foreign Minister. Following a three-day meeting of frank and friendly discussion, I was able to receive a written pledge of non-interference, non-intervention, and of support for East Timor's independence. In view of the importance of this document, I would like to quote "in extensu" from it:

(please turn page)

*Adam Malik*
*Menteri Luar Negeri*
*Republik Indonesia*

Jakarta, 17th June 1974.

To :
Mr, Jose Manuel Ramos Horta
D i l i
Portuguese Timor.

Dear Mr. Horta :

I was pleased to meet you during your recent visit to Jakarta, Indonesia.

We, the people of Indonesia, and the Government of Indonesia, have been heartened by the recent changes that have taken place in Lisbon, Portugal.

This change of government and of policy outlook came as something of a surprise to most people, including you and your people in Timor.

In our view, these developments offer a good opportunity to the people of Timor to accelerate the prosess towards independence, as well as to generate overall national development and to promote the progress of the people of Timor.

The Government of Indonesia untill now still adheres to the following principles :

I. The independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exeption for the people in Timor.

II. The Government as well as the people of Indonesia have no intention to increase or to expand their territory, or to occupy other territories other that what is stipulated in their Constitution. This reiteration is to give you a clear idea, so that there may be no doubt in the minds of the people of Timor in expresing their own wishes.

III. For this reason, whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence, can be assured that the Government of Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both countries.

Please convey my message to your people in Timor.

With my best wishes and warm regards to you and to all the people in Timor.

Sincerely yours,

ADAM MALIK.

In the months that followed, FRETILIN leaders spared no effort to placate Indonesia's fears that an independent East Timor might become a source of threat and instability in the region. FRETILIN leadership had in high regard the interests of the countries of the region and considered East TImor's membership in ASEAN. However, Mr. Chairman, in spite of FRETILIN's strenuous efforts and demonstrations of good faith, the Indonesian generals - the very same who were engaged in the Malaysian fiasco and the West New Guinea campaign - had made up their mind the moment the prospect of an independent East Timor surfaced: an independent East Timor was inconceivable. For the Indonesian generals of Java who daydream of restoring the defunct Madjapahit empire incorporation of East Timor into the Republic was a logical course.

The Government of Indonesia hoped that the majority of the people of East Timor would opt for integration into the Republic. However, the results of the local elections in East Timor, conducted by the Portuguese Government, for election of several hundred village chiefs, were a clear message to the Government of Indonesia: more than 90 percent of the democratically-elected chiefs were independentist candidates.

The moment it was clear to Jakarta that Indonesia's puppet group was not but a gang of corrupt and incompetent elements, numbering no more than 200 in the entire territory, the Indonesian Government began a campaign of radio propaganda, mixed with threats of military intervention and infiltration of commando groups in the border region to cause unrest and instability.

The Indonesian Government's pledges of non-interference and of support for East Timor's independence were openly and grossly violated. On December 7,1975, Indonesia launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor at a time when the territory was at peace and a "de facto" FRETILIN Administration was functioning. Claiming to "liberate East Timor from

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Portuguese colonialism" when the colonial power was just too willing to give independence to the people of the territory, and with the absurd excuse to "restore peace and order" when peace and order had been restored by the FRETILIN Administration three months earlier, Indonesian troops were sent against the people of East Timor.

The days, weeks and months that followed Indonesian intervention in East Timor with the claim to "liberate" us from colonialism, were the darkest in our history. Six years after Indonesia's aggression, as many as 200,000 people - and maybe more - have perished in consequence of mass killings, indiscriminate bombing and burning of villages, schools medical centers and crops. Indonesia's actions in East Timor amount to a crime of genocide as defined in the 1948 Convention. The Permanent People's Tribunal, meeting in Lisbon on 19,20 and 21 June 1981, to study a complaint lodged by FRETILIN against the President of the Republic of Indonesia, concluded:

> The Tribunal finds it totally justified that several authoritative sources have accused the Indonesian Government of committing genocide against the Maubere people in East Timor.
>
> In the case of East Timor, the Tribunal is aware of the scale of the massacres to which its people have fallen victim. But it is also aware, thanks to all the evidence placed before it, of the intent to annihilate the national and cultural identity of the Maubere people. It is that people "as such" which it sought to destroy.
>
> The combination of massacre and cultural destruction demonstrate without a shadow of doubt that this is indeed a case of genocide.
>
> The Indonesian authorities wish not only to destroy the national and cultural identity of the Maubere people but to force them, by the barbarous methods we have recited, into assuming Indonesian citizenship.
>
> The Tribunal finds that the Indonesian authorities must be condemned for the crime of genocide in addition to the crime of aggression.

Today, as this Committee considers item 93 of its agenda, a catatrophe is in the making in East Timor. A major Indonesian military offensive,

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similar to the ones unleashed against FRETILIN in 1976 and 1977, is again under way. Church sources in Indonesia and Australia confirm that a new outbreak of fighting is taking place between FRETILIN forces and INdonesian troops. I quote from a document we received from an indonesian source:

> In accordance with an instruction of the Military Commander, Gen. Radjaguguk, all over East Timor all men between 15-50 years have to join the army in its effort to chase FRETILIN... The operation, called "Operasi Keamanan" (Operation Security), is carried out with the intention to wipe out all FRETILIN by dislodging them... and forcing them to keep moving from one place to another.

Another reputed church source in East Timor gives a similar account of the unfolding of a major catastrophe. He writes:

> ...Timor is now in a situation much worse than the one in previous years. All the people, either men or women, are forced to take part in patrols into the bush. The aim of this business of patrolling is to force us to fight FRETILIN, who are our brothers in the bush.
>
> In Manatuto and other villages as well, all the schools are closed, the public departments are closed because the people have to go and take part in the "operation". Starting with children aged 9 and over to elderly people up to 60, everyone is forced to go into the bush...
>
> Besides that there are constantly imprisonments of people who are deported to Atauro. In Atauro there are now about 60 thousand people.

After six years of failure to defeat FRETILIN, the Indonesian generals are now resorting to East Timorese youth and elderly to do the job they have failed to do. This coward and inhumane Indonesian behavior is only an indication of the total failure of its military adventure in East Timor, and it is a clear demonstration of the vile racism towards the East Timorese, and Indonesian minority groups in West New Guinea, South Molucas, Sumatra,etc.

This Indonesian assault will bring about a serious outbreak of famine, similar to the tragic famine of 1978-1979, when the pictures of starving children appeared in major newspapers around the world. Church officals

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are expressing concern and are appealing for immediate international relief aid to preempt the tragic consequences of a major food crisis.

At this moment, there is not a single foreign presence in East Timor that might function as a restraint on the Indonesians. The International Committee of the Red Cross -ICRC- was asked to terminate its medical programme in East Timor in April of this year. We believe the ICRC relief work in East Timor saved many thousands of lives, in spite of the fact that its activities were extremely limited and hampered by corruption at all levels, among the Indonesian military authorities in Dili. Hundreds of refugees have testified that more than 50 percent of the foreign aid destined to East Timor ended up in commerical shops or in other Indonesian islands. In most cases, the East Timorese, who are in desperate need of medicine, are forced to procure it in the local Chinese and Indonesian shops.

The abrupt ICRC departure - which the ICRC officals have failed to fully explain - left East Timor without a single foreign doctor, nurse or foreign presence. The few Indonesian doctors working in Dili have their hands full with the Indonesian soldiers, wounded in the war. It should not be difficult, Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, to imagine the suffering, pain and desperation of a country, a whole country, without a doctor. Just imagine, Mr. Chairman, the people of Lebanon without a doctor, a nurse, in the aftermath of Israeli destructive raids. Just imagine distinguished delegates, the millions of refugees of Africa suffering in pain, slowly perishing in silence, without a drop of international solidarity. The image of peoples, suffering from war, persecution, hunger, pain, is everywhere, near to our homes, near to us, within ourselves and our daily thoughts.

Year after year, this Committee has been forced to listen to a barrage of Indonesian propaganda claims about imaginary economic developments social progress, etc. The reality, Mr. Chairman, is that East Timor, once a peaceful paradise, a bountiful island, became a living hell over the last six years of Indonesian occupation. For anyone who might

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have any illusions about Indonesia's presence in East Timor, I would like to quote from a letter, dated June 3,1981, and addressed to President Suharto of Indonesia by two East Timorese puppet members of the so-called "People's Representive Assembly of East Timor". I quote:

> The Regional People's Representative Assembly of the Province of East Timor is continually... receiving verbal as well as written reports and complaints... about torture, murders and other unimagin able cases...
>
> ...in Dili...several women in a prison were tortured with eletricity and burnt with cigarettes by elements of the Armed Forces who also inflicted immoral sexual acts upon them.

The document also demystifies Indonesia's propaganda claims of economic developement and social prgress. I quote:

> After five years of integration, the vast majority of the [East Timorese] people are not yet able to enjoy a stable living condition.
>
> After hearing a radio broadcast (about development projects) some members of the East Timor Representatives Assembly made on-the-spot investigations to check the validity of these reports... but discovered that they were totally fictious... They reported the construction of some offices for Agricultural Services which were said to have been newly built whereas all that had been done was that buildings that had been standing since Portuguese times were repainted.

We emphasised this document because it was an expression of anger and frustration by the very local lackeys of the Indonesian military authorities. After six years of Indonesian aggression, even those elements who sold their souls to the Indonesians are now being forced to express their discontentment against the policy of massacres, torture, persecution, corruption and oppression imposed upon our people by the foreign army.

This document tells a lot about the most blatant lies we hear from the mouth of the Indonesian Representative year after year in this Committee. In the course of the debates in this Committee, the distinguished delegates

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will again hear a tedious repetition of imaginary developments in East Timor. Indonesia's crude propaganda reaches the boundaries of ridicule. An example of this grotesque propaganda is found in a Press Release distributed by the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations. This famed Press Release reads as follows:

> More East Timorese will now be enjoying television as the result of the donation of four, twenty-six inch color television sets to them by Pertamina, the Indonesian oil company. The donation of the television sets is seen as another example of Pertamina's commitment to the development of the province.

Frankly, I don't know whether to attribute this "Press release" to simple and forgivable stupidity, or to a mental structure fundamentally racist. For the Government of Indonesia to judge it necessary to advertise at the United Nations the donation of four TV sets to the people of East TImor, tells alot about the reality of misery, poverty and pain inflicted upon our people since 1975. The Indonesian Government might consider advising the racist South African regime to offer a few color television sets to the people of Soweto or Nambia as this could make the blacks happier and forget about majority rule; or the Indonesians should offer their good advice to the Israeli and American governments about the Palestinian autonomy talks: maybe four color television sets could save the Camp David accords.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates: The people of East Timor have endured a brutal war of aggression for the past six years. Numerous United Nations resolutions have fallen on deaf ears. The Security Council adopted two resolutions, calling upon the Governement of Indonesia to withdraw all its forces from East Timor "without delay". The General Assembly adopted six resolutions reaffirming the right of our people to self-determination and independence. Throughout the world, Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations, Trade Unions, student organisations, scholars, religious officals, etc. have called upon the Government of Indonesia to cease its occupation of East Timor and to allow the East

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Timorese to exercise freely our right to self-determination and independence.The Parliamentary Union and the Socialist International[10/] have reaffirmed their support to our sacred rights.

The Vth and VIth Conferences of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries reaffirmed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, with only seven reservations out of 93 delegations.

Indonesia, a founding member of the Movement, has found herself trampling upon the principles and ideals of Bandung. When a member of the Non-Aligned Movement resorts to armed aggression to acquire territory beyond its historical boundaries, the Third World nations that cherish peace and freedom must condemn this action firmly. For if the Movement itself condons with silence acts of armed aggression because this was perpetrated by a member State, where will be the moral force of the Movement when other powers resort to armed aggression to setle international disputes?

It makes a mockery of the United Nations' system when one hears the representatives of none other than Indonesia claiming moral authority to dispense judgements on conflict situations in other parts of the world. It is abnominable for certain countries to sanction Indonesia's invasion, territorial annexation and its war of genocide, while they claim morality to judge other countries in the region and elsewhere.

Indonesia's response has been an arrogant defiance of the international community, a rejection of all norms and rules of international Law. Indonesia's attitudes towards the United Nations reminds us, ironicaly, that Indonesia herself resorted to the moral and political authority of this world body during her struggle for independence more than 30 years ago. Indonesian leaders appeared before the international community to plead their case and to appeal for support. It is ironic, to say the least, that now the very same Indonesian generals who sent their

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representatives to the United Nations, seeking support and recognition, are now rejecting in the most abject manner the authority of the most important organisation of mankind.

It is often said that life is full of ironies. The irony here today, Mr. Chairman, is that if we look into the agenda of this Committee, we are confronted not by a classic situation of a European power subjugating the people of its colony, but rather a Third World country that emerged from colonialism assuming the role of its former master. While Portugal, the Administering power has pledged, again and again, its commitment to East Timor's independence and freedom, Indonesia, a country born from colonialism, resorts to military might to crush this small nation of ours. The irony is that it is not Great Britian, France, Belgium, the Netherlands or Portugal who are here on trial for their colonial misbehavior. It is a travesty of justice when a Third World country that claims a historical role in the anti-colonial struggle, a place in the Non-Aligned Movement, and a seat in the Special Committee on Decolonization, appears today as a regional gendarme with authority to intervene and occupy other countries. It should not be forgotten, Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, that Indonesia's invasion of East Timor was not an isolated case. Before East Timor, Indonesia tried to annex Malaysia. The British stood up and the Indonesian invading navy, air force and marines were beaten before they reached Malaysian shores.

In the late 60's, after failing on its Malaysia adventure, Indonesia turned to West New Guinea. Here, the United Nations contributed to one of the most bizarre episodes of the decolonization history. An entire nation, the black nation of West New Guinea, a nation whose history, culture, languages, are totally alien to the rest of Indonesia, was handed over to the Republic of Indonesia in a shameful farce called

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"act of free choice". The Reprt of the Secretary General regarding the so-called "act of free choice" in West New Guinea, contained in document A/7723 of 6 November 1966, makes a painful and sorrowful reading. Today, the black nation of West New Guinea languishes under Indonesian racist imperial rule.

It is our hope that this tragic episode will not be repeated. The United Nations lent itself to Indonesia's misuse and manipulation in the West New Guinea issue. We, the people of East Timor, bearing in mind that fateful error of the United Nations, appeal here to the international community to live up to its obligations in safeguarding the sacred rights of our people to self-determination and independence.

The Government of Indonesia, realising that it could not succeed in East Timor with a shabby farce, has rejected any United Nations role to ascertain the wishes of our people. Instead of "an act of free choice" with the United Nations cooperation, it decided to send in thousands of troops, tanks, air force, navy to impose its will by force of arms. While fierce fighting was taking place around the capital, Dili, the Government of Indonesia rounded up twenty-eight East Timorese and pronounced them "elected" by the people. In a ceremony lasting only three hours, these helpless elements had only one item to vote on: the "integration" of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia. The Government of Indonesia outdid its West New Guinea parody of 1969. The difference is that the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Special Committee on Decoloization have rejected the East Timor farce. This time, the Government of Indonesia lost the game.

The Government of Indonesia now claims that East Timor is part of the Republic and the people of the territory have already exercised their right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with resolutions

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1514 (XV). This absurd claim is contradicted by the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which states:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation;

2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

3. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.

Resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960, Principle VIth, states that "a Non-Self-Governing Territory can be said to have reached a full measure of self-government by:

(a) Emergence as a sovereign independent State;

(b) Free association with an independent State; or

(c) Integration with an independent State.

Even if one were to accept as valid the political options proposed in a) and b), it should be taken into account Principle IX of resolution 1541 (XV) which spells out the procedures to be followed before a Non-Self-Governing Territory becomes integrated with an independent state:

> The integration should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the Territory's peoples, acting with full knowledge of the change in their status, their wishes having been expressed through informed and democratic process, impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage.

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Mr. Chairman, the United Nations' Special Committee on Decolonization had no part in the shabby farce mounted by the Indonesian military authorities in May 1976. The minimum conditions required by the Western-inspired resolution 1541 (XV) were not met. Even Indonesia's closest ally, the United States State Department, could not but concede publicly that the so-called "People's Assembly" of May 31, 1976, was a farce. A State Department offical, addressing a joint hearing on East Timor, on May 23, 1977, of the House Sub-Committee on International Organisations and the Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs said about the Indonesian orchestrated "elections":

> The process itself took place at a time of military occupation by Indonesia during which considerable fighting was still going on.

More than eighty-five percent of the territory was under FRETILIN control and more than ninety percent of the population lived in FRETILIN held areas.

Therefore, we firmly reject Indonesia's claims over East Timor. The people of East Timor, through armed struggle, have demonstrated their srong opposition to Indonesia's rule. Over the past several years, thousands of East Timorese gave their lives for our independence and freedom, and to this day, the Government of Indonesia has failed to achieve its ambitions of grandeur and conquest.

About 30,000 Indonesian troops are bogged down in a costly war. Six years after Indonesia's military assault, Indonesia's failure to control East Timor can best be described by an Indonesian Church leader in an internal memorandum circulated to aid agencies. I quote:

> The East part of East Timor is still dangerous. Even around Dili, the situation is not as peaceful as it seems to be... due to security reasons, Karya Kasih operates only in Dili and suburb areas.

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In spite of the difficulties facing the people of East Timor, there should be no illusion that FRETILIN will surrender the sacred principles for which tens of thousands gave their lives. Indonesia's brutalities, torture, rape, persecution, racism, will not defeat us. It will only harden our resolve to oppose by all possible means - and I repeat by all possible means - Indonesia's annexionist designs. We shall fight for as long as necessary and wherever we deem appropriate until the Government of Indonesia acknowledges our right to be free, independent and sovereign.

We call upon the international community to reaffirm its support to our right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV); to extend moral, political and material assitance to FRETILIN, the sole authentic representative of the people of East Timor; to speed up humanitarian assitance to the people of East Timor to preempt a new outbreak of famine; to call upon the Government of Indonesia to desist from further aggression and crimes against our peaceful people.

It might take us another year, three, ten or twenty years, but the FRETILIN flag of freedom and the national flag of the Democratic Republic of East Timor will again be hoisted in our capital city of Dili, on the same flag pole where our sacred flag was first hoisted on November 28,1975.

Thank You.